

1/4/19

Forty Under 40
Business Record
The Depot at 4th,
100 4th Street,
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Forty Under 40 Committee,

I have had the pleasure to get to know Matt Blake over the course of several years through both political activities and Toastmasters. Matt is very involved in local politics, especially in the Urbandale area. This is how we met. However, I have found that my best connection with Matt is through my weekly meetings with him at Toastmasters. Toastmasters is an International organization dedicated to improving public speaking and leadership skills.

He is a unique Toastmaster. Even from his first speech, I could see he had a natural talent for being in front of a crowd. Matt consistently provides well-crafted speeches. Matt rarely uses notes, always steps in front of the lectern to give his speech, has excellent eye contact, and provides a wonderful voice variety and passion to his speeches. On top of that he has a wonderful sense of humor that can resonate with a crowd. Even during some of his most dense or tragic speeches, he adds little bits of levity to keep the crowd engaged.

Through Toastmasters, Matt is seeking to develop his leadership skills and speaking ability for both professional and personal goals. The Toastmasters curriculum is designed to push you out of your comfort zone and take on new challenges. I have never witnessed Matt shy away from any of these challenges. In fact, some of the most difficult speeches or leadership challenges often result in some of his most memorable speeches. Over my years I have watched him improve from a raw talent speaker to a polished orator.

Matt is deserving of Forty Under 40 as he is constantly trying to improve himself through Toastmasters and he is a leader in the Urbandale community. Matt does not rest at his current level, he always is looking at ways to improve. Beyond Toastmasters, I have witnessed Matt take on numerous community activities in a leadership capacity. From Urbandale 4th of July, to the Urbandale Civil Rights Commission, to serving in the Iowa Army National Guard, Matt is dedicated to working for the betterment of people and community.

I know of few young people who are more deserving of recognition of Forty Under 40 than Matt Blake.

Sincerely,

Rick Smith
Retired,
34 Years in Sales and Marketing Manager for a Consumer Product Company
Contributing Writer for Iowa Starting Line